

The Republican.

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FROM HUMPHREY BOYLE IN THE GILTSPUR STREET
COMPTER, LONDON, TO HIS BROTHER JAMES
BOYLE OF MANCHESTER.

Giltspur Street Compter, Sept. 2, 1823.

DEAR BROTHER,

FROM your last I perceive with pleasure that your mind is now as clear of superstition as mine. The nonsense, the bestialities, and the slavish doctrines of the Bible, I know you have long rejected and despised as being too grossly absurd to require any serious consideration; but you could not so easily give up the notion of the existence of a supreme architect and governor of the universe. This is not surprising. Some plausible arguments may be urged in support of the popular opinion of the existence of a God; but none, none whatever, in defence of that mischievous book called the Bible, or of that man-degrading thing called Christianity. The silly story of Adam and Eve eating forbidden fruit and bringing such misery upon their children; the Baron Munchausen tale of God drowning the whole world except a ship load of animals from which was to spring a new race of rebellious subjects; the hocus pocus tricks of Moses and Aaron; the monstrous story of one person suffering death in order to atone for the sins of the whole world, and upon which unjust and crime-begetting principle the whole structure of Christianity rests; the shameful story of a woman being at once the mother, the daughter, and the wife of God; these, and a hundred equally ridiculous and immoral tales which may be gleaned from the Bible, told you, at once, that the boasted Sacred Scriptures, so far from being the work of an unerring and almighty God, must not only have been the work of men, but of bad men, and consequently that Christianity is a cheat, and unworthy the attention of rational creatures any further than as regards its destruction. If you enquired of professing Christians for an explanation of what struck you as unreasonable and unjust, they invariably told you not to pry into the mysteries of heaven, but to believe and to adore. You found that every one who ventured to stand up in support of the truth of these absurdities was

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compelled to shuffle, and twist, and quibble like a lawyer, when he has got a notoriously bad cause in hand. No wonder then that you so soon became an unbeliever.

As you wish to read something in defence of Materialism, I would recommend Mirabaud's "System of Nature" as the best book I know on the subject. But you will probably find that some parts of this work, from the nature of the subject, will be beyond your comprehension; and indeed the whole seems to have been written more for the information of the learned than for the instruction of the unlettered artizan. This is the reason why it has never been prosecuted. Those who live without labour may read what they please, but if you and I presume to think for ourselves and have the honesty to open our mouths to our neighbours, we must be packed off to prison for our presumption. The "Age of Reason" speaks intelligibly to the unlearned working classes; it speaks in such a manner as you and I can easily understand; hence the dread of its circulation. All the cry is, that the minds of the poor will be tainted by the circulation of irreligious writings; that is, the poor will be enabled to see where and how they have been imposed upon: no anxiety is felt, no fears are expressed for the fate of the souls of the learned and the rich who read these irreligious writings: no, it is only such base mechanical souls as yours and mine that the laws of England and the law-makers are so particularly anxious to save from destruction! The royal and the aristocratical souls may go to the devil without even an attempt, from either Mr. Butterworth or Mr. Wilberforce, to save them. We should be particularly grateful to the soul-preservers for their especial care of our immortal and immaterial part, were it not that we know, at what a price they would have us purchase it;—to see nothing but what they would have us see—to hear nothing but the praises of our task-masters—never to speak but by their permission, and then only to express our thanks for benefits received—to eat, to drink, to sleep, to work, to pray, to murder, at their command;—in short, they would have us to live for them alone! Who would purchase an ideal heaven at such a price?

There is another work I should like you to see, if you have not seen it, entitled, "Letters to Eugenia," and published in the second volume of "The Deist." It is not a work on Materialism; but it completely exposes, in an easy and masterly style, the absurd and contradictory dogmas of Christianity. I was never personally acquainted with but one preacher of the gospel, and I remember, that when he had read this little work, he pronounced it "excellent;" but such is this preacher's partiality for what he calls "leading the people on to abandon their prejudices by degrees," that he is still preaching what he believes to be an imposition.

You say, "When I am told by Christians or Deists that in

man there is something that will live and be conscious of previous existence after the disorganization of his body, and that this something is not matter, I am unable to conceive what it can be; for if it is not composed of matter, it must, of course, be composed of nothing, and, therefore, is nothing." Thence you conclude, that "all gods, devils, spirits, and souls, are nothing more than 'fancy's coinage.'" In my opinion you come to a very rational conclusion. What reasons can they give you for believing that what is called the soul of man will live after death? or, can they tell you what a soul is like, since they will not allow it to be composed of that of which we can form an idea? But why, of all the animals in existence, is man alone to live without a body? The same arguments for the immortality of the soul of man, apply to the immortality of the horse, or of any other animal. Man, it is true, is the most intelligent animal we know in existence; but still, he is nothing more than a link in the great chain of nature; the summit of known intelligence; and it is not a necessary consequence that because he is superior to all known animals, that he will live when he is no longer man. As well might we expect that a clock would continue to mark the progress of time after being shattered into a thousand pieces, as for an animal to see, and hear, and feel after the disorganization of its body.

We see that all nature teems with animal life; we see animals gradually rising one above another, from the insect, imperceptible to the naked eye, up to man the boasted lord of the creation. And, seeing this continued link, may we not conclude that there are animals in existence who are more intelligent than man? and if that should be the case, and if we follow up the reasoning of Christians, that man ought not to die like other animals because he is more intelligent than they are, should we not conclude that man would have to give place to the next race of animals, and that to the next, and so on until we arrive at that which is inferior only to God himself, (supposing a God to exist) and which, of all the animated beings in the universe, alone would be thought worthy to keep him company in heaven? You will sometimes be told that man is made in vain, if he is to come into the world for only a few fleeting years and then to be no more. Mark how consistent these people are! Has a horse got a soul to save? no. Has a cow? no. Has an ass? no. Then has God made the horse, the cow, and the ass in vain? No, says the consistent religionist, God has made nothing in vain. Such are the contradictions man is led into by his pride and self-importance!

We have no knowledge of any thing belonging to man that can live when the body is decomposed. What is called the soul, is weak in childhood, vigorous in manhood, decays in old age; and, we may infer, is no more when the machine ceases to work. Proofs cannot be given of its immortality. If the soul were a sensitive thing prior to our having our being, we should have as much

wisdom in childhood as when we have arrived at the years of maturity; but you will have observed, that all the knowledge of which we are possessed, has been obtained from a knowledge of the physical objects around us by means of our organs of sense. Not an idea have we, but what has been obtained through some of these. There is no such thing as an innate idea: every idea is derived from some physical object: hence the impossibility of our knowing any thing of God, of spirit. If we think of God, we are compelled to imagine him like something we have already observed; and we have never observed any thing but what is material. Mind, it is said, is not material. Without pretending to define what mind is, and I acknowledge that I cannot define it to my own satisfaction, we are physically certain that there cannot be mind without body. Mind seems to be the result or the effect of a particular combination of atoms, and when the atoms are disorganized there is no mind; and, perhaps, the same atoms differently combined would produce a different mind. You must read Mirabaud on innate ideas and the immortality of the soul.

On the subject of a first cause, Materialists readily acknowledge their ignorance; and from this acknowledgement religionists seem to triumph; for they imagine, that because they attribute all things to God, they solve the difficulty in a moment. Let us suppose a time when there was nothing that we know of in existence; a time when there was neither fire, earth, air, nor water: here, then, there would be an immense void, a trackless vacuum, an infinity of nothing. When we have supposed such a time as this, may we not ask, *what was there to bring any thing into existence?* When something is to be made there must be something to work upon; but, in the absence of all materiality there would be nothing, and we all know, that nothing can produce nothing. It requires no learning to know this: the most simple unlettered reasoner knows as well as the man of science, that if there ever was a time when nothing existed, nothing would have existed now. But what says the Christian? Why, he says, that in this boundless vacuum, in the absence of every thing material, an Almighty God existed, and that he had existed from all eternity. Well, then, James, you see that these people believe that *something* is eternal, and they are as unable to account for the *cause* of this something, as Materialists are to account for the cause of what is material. Paine has said, that it is difficult to suppose a time when nothing existed, but much more difficult to suppose that things never had a beginning. I think quite the reverse: it is difficult to suppose that matter is eternal, but it is a far greater difficulty to suppose that it ever had a beginning; for, the latter supposition necessarily pre-supposes the existence of a Beginner at a time when nothing existed. Thus you see, that the believer in a God is as ignorant of a first cause as the Materialist, but not so candid as to acknowledge it. This kind of reasoning, I know, is not satisfac-

tory to the greater part of mankind, but it is so far satisfactory to me as to compel me to believe that matter is eternal.

If we enquire where God is, we are told that he is everywhere; that he is infinite; that he fills the whole of space. If this be the case, you and I, and every thing whether animate or inanimate must be parts of him; and in punishing us he must necessarily inflict torment upon himself. And if his pure spirit, supposing for a moment that we know what spirit is, is diffused throughout the universe, must he not be in hell? must he not be the devil himself? I wish that the good spirit were universal; how happy then would be the lot of mankind! Freedom, love, contentment, friendship, would make the children of the earth but as one happy family; and the chimerical heaven would be lost sight of in the possession of a real one. But alas! the bad spirit seems to have driven the other almost out of existence, and oppression, cant, and misery, are triumphant. Who, after seriously contemplating the degraded state of the world, can say that he believes there is a being in existence who is good and almighty? If he is good, why not make his children good also? If he is almighty, why suffer such a wretch as the devil to exist? To impute all evil to the devil, and to say that it is God's will that we be good, is to argue against his almighty; and to say that he could destroy evil if he pleased, but that he will not, is making him out to be any thing but good. For my part, I have no hesitation in saying, that if there are any proofs of the existence of a being entirely spiritual, they go as far to prove him a spiritual devil as a spiritual God.

When I was young in Deism, I, too, imagined that there was a Supreme Being in existence who was all benevolence; but a shop-mate of mine used to puzzle me by asking, "why God permitted an unoffending infant to suffer pain?" My Christian shop-mate attributed the child's sufferings to the disobedience of Adam, which, you know, was making God appear worse than even Charles Murray's constitutional worthies, for bad as they are they will not punish *you* because *I* have published opinions hostile to Christianity. But I, who laughed at such a story, and though I saw that the child, like every thing with animation, was affected by the surrounding elements, and, consequently, subject to pleasing or painful sensations, was unable to conceive why God, who, I imagined, could controul the elements, permitted the little innocent to suffer as it did. I believed that God was just, yet I saw the child suffer and was conscious that it could not have done any thing to merit its sufferings. I soon after read the "System of Nature," which, with a little reflection, set my mind at rest respecting the existence of spiritual or supernatural bodies.

Be not startled at the many difficulties by which Christians endeavour to bewilder the understanding of the child of nature. The causes of the thousands of phenomena by which we are sur-

rounded, are as inexplicable to the spiritualist as to us; but he, unwilling to be thought ignorant, and sometimes afraid to question the truth of what his parents taught him, without hesitation ascribes them to a cause which he calls God, and which cause he confesses is incomprehensible. When you are unable satisfactorily to account to yourself for this or that phenomenon, it only shows that your understanding is limited and incapable of taking in the whole of nature; but you will never, I trust, be ashamed to confess your ignorance upon what is beyond your comprehension. Leave such false shame to Christians who feel no shame at many things of which they ought to be ashamed. Fanaticism will next assail you with the horrid death-bed scenes of infidels: God's judgments upon unbelievers: the awfulness of being summoned into the presence of an angry God (an angry God!); and will so particularly describe to you the miseries of the damned, that one might swear the orthodox have been initiated into the mysteries of Tartarus. You are not to be deceived by such stuff. You see they are never satisfied unless they make a tyrant of their God. Why should you be afraid to die? Why be afraid to face a being who is all goodness? Suppose you were this moment to appear before this unknown being, and to be accused of unbelief, could you not boldly state that your only crime was error; that you had not believed in his existence because you had had no proofs of it; that you had found that those who pretended to know any thing of him, quarrelled amongst themselves as to what he was or where he was; that you were compelled to believe as you did from the force of circumstances over which you had not the least controul; and, if you found this being knew all things, could you not appeal to himself for the truth of what you had stated? An innocent man may sometimes be afraid to be brought before a human tribunal, even when it is known to be pure and uncorrupted, because the judgement of the court is liable to be misled; but, when the Judge cannot err; when he is just, and knows the springs and motives of every action; when there is not a possibility of his being deceived; no honest man would be afraid to appear before him; and I am satisfied that before such a Judge you will never appear with "fear and trembling."

Your mind is completely freed from superstition, whether religious or political. You have imbibed what may be fairly called liberal principles. But let me guard you against the abuse of this phrase; or, rather, let me endeavour to give you a true notion of liberality.

All men who are not superstitious cannot be said to be liberal in principle: a man may be a bigoted Atheist or a bigoted Deist, as well as a bigoted Christian, and bigotry of any kind is odious and the reverse of liberality of sentiment. Amongst irreligionists there are but few bigots compared with the unbelieving bigots in proportion to the strength of the parties; nevertheless I

have seen some irreligionists so narrow-minded, that I have many a time heartily wished they belonged to our narrow-minded enemies. These are tenacious of their opinions without reasoning, and are too much like Christians in imputing hypocrisy to those whose opinions do not exactly square with their own. This is not liberal; for we ought always to bear in mind that two men were never yet found who thought alike on all things; and we should also remember, that there has been nothing in religion, however ridiculous, however extravagant and contrary to common sense, but in defence of which men have been willing to sacrifice their lives.

The men proved nothing by their dying, but we are bound to believe that they conscientiously thought their opinions right. What appears ridiculous to you, does not appear so to another, and you will both appear wrong to a third person. This ought to teach us to bear with the weaknesses of one another, and not to be too hasty in attributing deceit to those who do not think as we do. Christians, certainly, do not act upon this liberal principle, but that is no reason why we should follow their example. They are generally bigots; their education and their slavish principles naturally engender bigotry, and they accordingly are liberal enough in applying "hypocrite, liar," &c., to their opponents; but there are some of them who well deserve the name of liberal, and of these I would instance Mr. Fox the author of that excellent sermon published in the report of Mrs. Wright's Trial. A really enlightened and liberal-minded man knows well that our opinions are the result of impressions upon our minds which we cannot and ought not, if we could, avert; that we are entirely the creatures of circumstances; that it is as impossible for us to change our opinions at pleasure as it is for us to see or to hear what we wish to see or hear. Had Thomas Paine been the son of a Peer of the realm, it is very likely that we should never have seen "Common Sense" or "Age of Reason," and the Citizens of the United States of America might have been petitioning our Government to this day to ease them of a heavy tax, instead of being an independent people: it is likely that he would have been what is understood by a liberal Whig. And but for the French Revolution, probably the world would never have known Buonaparte further than as a daring leader of a band of free-booters. You see then, that we think and act in spite of ourselves; that we cannot think otherwise than as we do. There is no merit due to you and me for being Materialists, and we will charitably suppose that the poor Indian of whom Voltaire speaks, conscientiously believed that he would not go to heaven unless he died holding a cow by the tail.

You are aware that the mere belief in any particular opinions has no connection with the practice of morality or immorality. Religionists labour hard to shew that Atheism is demoralizing; but a very little reflection, and a slight observance of the practice

of mankind, will show you that speculative opinions and morality, are two distinct things. We have daily proofs of the immorality of Christians, and we cannot shut our eyes to the vices of Atheists. It is a folly then to bring forward great moral or immoral characters, as evidence of the truth or falsehood of any particular doctrines. If Christians were actually the strictest moralists in existence, and if the Bible contained the purest code of morals ever published, I should neither believe in revelation, nor in the existence of immaterial beings, and if Atheists were the greatest villains upon the face of the earth, I should lament that they should be such enemies to their own, and to others' happiness, but, I should still be an Atheist. But a great part of the world resemble the followers of the Capulets: they imagine that they are perfectly justified in extorting, deceiving, defaming and cheating, provided the "law is on their side," or provided there is no law to take cognizance of their misdemeanours. These people form a numerous class amongst the Christians, and many a time I have had occasion to mark how logically they reconcile their practice with their professions. But no body of men is free from this mean herd; and of course they are to be found in the ranks of irreligion and patriotism. Some of these, I can observe, with truth, justice, and patriotism, on their lips, are guilty of a thousand meannesses and dirty tricks of which no honest man would be guilty, and which in my opinion, mark them as unprincipled and contemptible characters. I sufficiently impressed upon your mind, the meanness of these characters, before you knew any thing of either Christianity or Deism; and I only mention it now because you have nearly arrived at that age when you will be compelled to mix more in society than you have hitherto done; I would have you avoid all such characters as far as lies in your power. For you must recollect, that, if you wish to be respected by the really respectable part of society, you must, in the first place, respect yourself. The advice I give you I would give to all, if I could; but more especially to the Materialists and Republicans, because I should like to see them superior to the rancour, the illiberality, the meanness, and the immorality, which so particularly distinguish the greater part of the religious world.

I shall be glad to give you all the information I can, but that, I assure you, will be very little; you must read and think for yourself, and let reason be your guide.

H. BOYLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE REPUBLICAN.

Mr. EDITOR, Brick Lane, Whitechapel.

I HAVE read your strictures on the Freethinking Christians, and find you are in possession of a deal of information relative to that sect; the whole is correct, except in one or two trivial instances, which I will endeavour to explain. About two years ago, nearly half of the members seceded, on which you say: "but it is difficult for an opponent to define what you do believe, because there is already an actual division in your sect." This would seem to imply, that they seceded on a difference in belief of dogmas, which is not the case, the seceders still believed the same: they left, because they would not stoop to the overbearing authority and tyranny of Mr. Thompson! The spirit of which is visible all through his "Evidences," in the self-sufficient and authoritative manner in which he has called on the Deist to answer his assumed principles, but it seems to have had a contrary effect on them, as no one has thought it worth their trouble (excepting yourself), since Mr. Burdon's Essays in the Freethinking Christian's Magazine, of 1813, which, in my opinion, were a complete answer and refutation.

I never heard that it was on the score of dress, that Mr. Chatfield left the Freethinking Christians, though it might have transpired before I joined their society. The chief accusation against him, I always understood to be, his contributing to the Unitarian fund, to support colleges for educating priests; as the Freethinking Christians were trying to put down priesthood: this was a great crime. I believe there was an old grudge between him, and Thompson. He was denounced by Thompson, for what I have stated above. And the "inner circle," as they were styled, who were chiefly dependant sycophants, and used to flutter round him, like a gnat round a candle, formed a party against Mr. Chatfield, and of course expelled him.

The Freethinking Christians pretend to be enlightened, and call themselves rational Christians; but, Sir, I cannot allow any man to be rational, who is credulous enough to believe in the supposed miracles, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, for, as Mr. Burdon, says, "they who believe in the miracles and resurrection of Christ, may believe any thing;" yet they discard with seeming disgust many of the floating dogmas of other sects. You say again, "and how you can calculate on heaven, after administering so much to the vices of mankind on earth, it is to me a paradox, upon your own statement of revealed religion." They do not believe in a heaven; they are not so high-minded as other sects; they, poor men! are content to believe that they shall again inhabit the earth.

It is said in their creed, published in their Magazine: "I believe that this wonderful and beautiful globe, as it ever has been, so it ever will be, the fit residence for man, that we shall dwell here with Christ as our head, for evermore," &c. &c. I always understood that revealed religion taught its followers to believe they should go to heaven. Where they have gained their information on which they form their belief, or by what process they are again to be renovated, I am at a loss to discover. Foolish Christians! it is very little odds what you believe in, it is all absurdity, and nonsense! Near the end you say, "You will do well at once, to war with every species of superstition, and turn your 'House of God' into a school of science, a Temple of Reason." And a little further on: "how much more useful would it be to lecture to them upon the sciences, and exhibit to them the powers and properties of matter by different scientific experiments?" You might, with equal propriety, call on the "*Ranters*" to lecture on science, as Mr. Thompson's sect; it is like calling on the House of Commons to reform itself! That Mr. Thompson objects to all kind of scientific research and wishes to keep his sect in the dark, the following will be a sufficient proof.

The whole society is divided into classes, (at least they were when I belonged to them from 1814 to 1818) to meet one evening in the week, to discuss religious subjects and doctrinal points! They were held at one of the member's houses, who had accommodation, and those attended who lived nearest to them, I belonged to a class meeting at a member's house, at Hoxton. A few of us who were fond of scientific pursuits formed a small junta, and met at this house, to discourse on geography, astronomy, &c., to instruct each other, as far as we were able in a familiar way. We made some progress, and soon acquired the appellation of the "*Athenians*": more joined us, and we wanted more room: at length it was proposed, in order to carry it on upon a larger scale, to meet at the Chapel, Jewin Crescent, as better adapted to hold our numbers: it was agreed to; and a pair of globes, and other apparatus were procured. We had only two meetings, when Thompson was informed of our proceeding; at the next Church Meeting, the propriety of it was discussed: and though many advocated, it was entirely overruled by Thompson, who said in an authoritative tone "that such pursuits were calculated to wean the minds of the young members from the study of Christianity!!" I need hardly tell you every one yielded to his dictum; it was all entirely dropped, the "*Athenians*" were no more! You see, Sir, Mr. Thompson has the same ideas, and evinces the same fear, relative to scientific pursuits, as all supporters of Christianity, of whatever sect: he knows that by scientific research they would discover the stability of the known laws of nature, by which they would discard the absurd belief in miracles, and, of course, the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which is their principle dogma;

for it appears to me, that no self-taught man of science, would believe any thing upon Bible authority: to me, they are as credulous and superstitious as any other sect. They renounce the miraculous conception, because they say the two first chapters of Matthew and the two first chapters of Luke, which contain the account, are interpolations. It may be so for what I know, or care; but yet they believe in his miraculous resurrection. Now, I see no greater absurdity in believing in the "dreaming chapters," than in the earth-quaking verses of Matthew.

It is astonishing to me that such men as Messrs. Thompson, Coates, Stevens, Mott, Fearon, Dillon, Ashurst, and others; men who pride themselves upon being scholars, philosophers, and the illuminati of the world, should pretend to believe such puerile, obscene, and contemptible tales, as are to be found in the Jew Books and New Testament, to be, what Mr. Thompson calls, "revealed religion!"

When we find men, who call themselves scholars, professing to believe such nonsense; how can we wonder at the credulity of the people embracing it in former ages, when few could read or write, and printing wholly unknown, they were then ignorant enough to believe any thing.

I remain, Sir,

With great respect, your Fellow-Citizen.

T. R. BAYLEY POTTS.

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

Greatham, Stockton-upon-Tees Sept. 16, 1823.

CITIZEN, AND FELLOW-BEING,

WERE I sensible that an apology was necessary to intrude myself on your notice, that apology should certainly be founded on the double basis of sympathy towards yourself and family, and a perfect approval of the pure, rational, and untrammelled morality, which, with a philanthropy hitherto unparalleled, you have universally endeavoured to disseminate, for the amelioration of mankind.

Citizen, I view you in a twofold light. I view you as the undaunted executor of the *will and testament* of that army of departed Heroes who preceded you in the illustrious work of accomplishing the redemption of man, from the mental delusion into which his natural ignorance had insensibly plunged him; and, I view you as the real advocate and representative of the living phalanx of moral and natural philosophers, who, till now, looked up to you as their forlorn hope, in the arduous, but not less cer-

tain and progressive attack, on the Hydra-headed-monster of priestcraft, superstition, kingcraft, and oppression. For my part, I can no longer look on you as the forlorn hope, but as the champion of the ever-inherent and inalienable "Rights of man," the rights of free opinion and discussion. I cannot but venerate and admire the fortitude with which you have conducted yourself from the "Temple of Reason," to the "Temple of Victory," over fanaticism and imposture. Your enemies the Bridge Street Gang and the Vice Gang, Parthian like, but much more barbarous than their prototype, may now and then in their flight, throw at you an impotent arrow. But you have overthrown them! Their strength which consisted in the superstition of a degraded and oppressed multitude is nearly at an end, and their annihilation at hand. But the Republicans of Albion cherish the lively hope that your treaty of peace with the humbled foe, will have for an immutable basis, the eternal abolition of Theocratical tyranny and Governmental slavery.

The people have now arrived at that height of intellectual discernment that nothing short of a new system of Governmental management, of their political existence as a society, and of their individual rights as freemen, will ever be likely to please them. No: nothing short of a representative form of Legislation and an elected Magistracy can now be of any effect.

While the knowledge of the oppression exercised over their fellow creatures, both by Church and State, was wholly confined to the rich, who from worldly motives connived at its monstrosity, the tyrannic system might go on undisturbed; but now the people have so far opened their eyes as to see through the thin veil of imposture and delusion which kept them hood-winked, how preferable: yes, I emphatically repeat it, how preferable would it be for our rulers themselves to effect that change which sooner or later will be forced upon them!! But how vain the expectation is, that an infatuated ruler will ever effect such change, the experience of the past, but two woefully shows. There remains then nothing else for the people but "to employ the minimum of evil to effect the maximum of good; after the example of the physical laws of nature, which procure repose to the animal world through horns, talons, and stings as an indispensable evil to produce the good of sensitive life." But we shall never be able to confer the least benefit on mankind, until those "talons and stings" are set to eradicate from the human mind those accursed metaphysical ideas, which the ignorance of man has rooted down to the very center of his heart. As it is on those ideas that all superstition is built, so I am firmly of opinion that on their removal from the idolatrous fabric, the whole must fall to the ground with such a tremendous crash, as to appal and deter their stoutest supporters from ever after attempting the re-erection.

Armed as the Materialist must be with the bright weapon of

truth—entrenched in the grand bulwark of reason—from which the theologian is necessarily obliged to fly—what human conjecture can supply the first with the most distant fear of defeat, or the second with the minutest hope of victory? How, I ask, can the enthusiastic theologian furnish the material mind of man with the idea of an immaterial being, seeing he has not, nor can possess, a percipient organ? Let him not ask me that most ridiculous of questions; Who made you? Such question must lead him into a labyrinth of absurdities, since it is only from human reasoning, on causes and effects, that he can, by possibility, apply the question: and if in my turn I demand of him; What is God? What is his spirit? What his essence? What his tangible substance? He will then find himself constrained to bid me renounce that very *reason*, by means of which alone, I could possibly have satisfied his own question. But is the origin of man so much involved in obscurity as that of the existence of his intangible—spiritual being? Certainly not, “Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return” says their religion’s founder; if then man is dust or matter, very little discernment can be required to find out who made him. Let the Theoclists explain to themselves the meaning of “Mother Earth” and they will no longer be at a loss for the invention of the true parent. One thing however is proved on the side of the Materialist, which is, that the existence of man is not an imaginary chimera, while on the Theologian’s side nothing can, nothing will, ever be proved.

For my part, I freely own to you, intrepid Citizen, that *Materialism* is the only system I have adopted for the sole rule of my life and will never receive nor support any doctrine short of it, nor will I ever cease to combat those fantastic and metaphysical ideas, which for time immemorial, have so lamentably paralized the intellectual faculties of man, degraded him below the brute creation, shackled his soaring mind, and robbed him of his felicity.

Permit me to present you with the enclosed *diminutive* token of the high value I set on the truly benevolent and philanthropic services you have so eminently rendered to my fellow-creatures. Indeed it is impossible that such services can ever be forgotten, or remain unrewarded.

Believe me, truly, yours in civic esteem,

J. E. ELLERKER.

P.S. The circumstance of my having become a Materialist being curious, I shall relate it to you briefly. I was born in 1789, in Cuba, a Spanish Island, and came to this country in 1811. But I never saw a Bible till the year 1817, *i. e.* the year after my (Catholic) Great-Uncle who was an Englishman died, for you of course, know, that in Catholic countries, the Bible is not to be had by the people; consequently, at the time I read the Bible, I

was 28 years of age. I assure you, my good Sir, that the shock I received at reading the incongruities, the absurdities, and impossibilities of that book, to say nothing of the immoralities which it contains, completely undermined the foundations of the dogmas I had been made swallow, and of the truths of which I many times had my doubts. I think that if the Bible was translated into Spanish and sent into Spain, that unhappy country would not fail to break asunder the fetters which superstition and a most iniquitous Government (when solely under her kings) has imposed on her. The Spaniards are of a remarkable quick conception, and if properly tutored, the happiest results might be anticipated. How they will come off in their present magnanimous struggle against the gigantic monster—despotism, time alone can develope. One thing militates most lamentably against them—want of knowledge in the mediocre and lower orders, though the Cortes and higher classes appear to be, and I believe are, men of great talents with few exceptions. Vale, or in English *farewell.*

JOS. E. ELLERKER.

**THE FOLLOWING NOTE WAS ADDRESSED TO
THE EDITOR OF THE " DORCHESTER, SHER-
BORNE, AND TAUNTON JOURNAL,"**

In consequence of an abusive article on Mr. Hume's motion for Free Discussion; in which it was sagely laid down, that it would be High Treason in the Ministers to yield such a thing, or to tolerate Carlile and his principles.

To SIR, Dorchester Gaol, July 18, 1823.

As I exchange newspapers with my Gaoler (by the way, the only piece of civility, or kindness, or humanity that passes between us; and this, I believe, because the major amount of accomodation happens to be on my side) I weekly see your effusions and compilations: and as I can bear, what I never yet found a Newspaper Editor could bear, either abuse or free discussion with equal complacency, I often smile over your little invectives against those who hold in no esteem the Christian's Mythology. These and such as these are the incidents that more than any thing else guile away my hours and abstract my contemplations from the never changing survey of the blank white walls of my prison chamber.

It is only within the last dozen days that I have begun to be a troublesome neighbour to the Editors of this county's Newspapers: but as I have not yet been able to ascertain the fact that an independent Newspaper has existence, or that fair play is the characteristic of any newspaper editor, I believe there will be very little danger of my continuing to be troublesome; for where a warrior can find none to combat, however powerful his propensity, there must be peace.

This is the situation in which I stand in this county. Although the pages of the three county papers are frequently tinged with abuse of my person and actions, there is not a man in the county, neither priest nor layman, who will venture into sober discussion with me upon any point that is matter of dispute between us. What then must be my feelings? What they are: those of triumph! Which is really the case, though in the fourth year of an *infamously* close confinement!

Do not mistake me: I do not expect to see what I write to you in print, in your paper, though I should wish it: but my greatest disappointment, though an agreeable surprise, woul be, to find a Christian Editor, of a Christian Newspaper, disposed to give his abused opponent an inch of paper in his columns for self-defence.

Should I find you an exception to the general rule, I have need to say no more at present, than that, I could analyze your article of thursday last, about what Christianity is, about what oaths are, and about what Church and State ought to be, so as, not to change, like the American Chemist by deflagration, the carbonic ingredients into the brilliant diamond (truth), but to shew that your frothy words are to society what carbon is to animal life—unwholesome and baleful.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
RICHARD CARLILE.

The above letter drew forth an answer from the Editor, half explanation and half apology; stating, that he could not admit the discussion, as he should not enter upon it with equal terms: adding that he held Christianity a matter not to be questioned—a sort of law to the Legislature: (something like Major Cartwright's Constitution!) But it produced a consent to insert the following advertisement: "Mr. Carlile presents his compliments to the Clergymen of the county of Dorset and would be happy and thankful to re-

ceive instructions from any of them who will condescend to visit and to impart knowledge to him whilst he remains in Prison."

The insertion of this advertisement had been refused by both of the other papers of the county; and the silly Editors had the satisfaction to see it copied into almost every paper in the country! Excepting the Chaplain, who comes as a matter of course, not one Clergyman of the County has accepted my invitation: not one of them to defend his dear Christianity before its Prisoner*!

R. CARLILE.

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

Bolton, Sept. 2, fourth Year of the Imprisonment of that undaunted Champion of the "Rights of Man," 1823
of the last of the GODS.

WORTHY CITIZEN,
THIS day I had the happiness to deliver into the hands of Mrs. Carlile, the sum of four Guineas to assist in the herculean undertaking of cleaning the more than augean stable of Priestcraft and Kingcraft. My Dear Friend, if it had been in the power of your Christian Judges instead of sending you and your worthy Sister to prison and fining you in Two Thousand Pounds, they would have sent your bodies to the flames the one as a burnt offering, and the other as a peace offering, to appease the wrath of the cruel and vindictive JEHOVAH: for JEHOVAH (like other Idols) has been offered human sacrifices, as may be seen in the case of Captain Jephthah, the Jew, who sacrificed his only daughter merely to perform a savage vow! What cruelty! What barbarity! What religion! for a man to imbrue his own hands in the blood of his only child!! Yet this worse than cannibal custom is to be found in what Christians call the "Holy Bible," said to be written by the inspiration of an "Intelligent Almighty Power!!" We are also told that his almighty could not save mankind from "eternal damnation" without making a sacrifice of his almighty self!!! Therefore it is no wonder that Christians are so fond of

* The day after the above was written, or on the 23, September, a Clergyman of Dorchester, an old Gentleman, Mr. Richman, reputedly learned paid me a visit for the first time. Discussion we had none: for, on finding that I did not credit the Gospel Part of the New Testament as historical fact, nor allow the existence of such a person as Jesus in Palestine, he engaged to produce sufficient evidence: and here we stand for the present or to the 30th September.

torturing their unfortunate victims when they have so many examples recorded in their "Holy Bible."

I cannot conclude without expressing satisfaction at the pleasure we enjoyed from the company and conversation of Mrs. Carlile. We are extremely sorry that she could not stop longer with us; for in fact, Sir, she gained the affection and esteem of all parties who had the opportunity of being in her company—and to be plain with you, Sir, I think you have never done Mrs. Carlile that justice which she is intitled to, by her merit: for, from what I have seen, instead of a passive, she must have been a very active agent.

I am, Sir, in behalf of the subscribers,

Your sincere admirer,

JOHN CAMERON.

John Cargon, Materialist	1 0	John Kell	1 0
John Grime, Materialist	1 0	Thomas Letham	0 6
Thomas Jones	1 0	John Ridings	0 6
John Cameron, Materialist	1 6	John Riddlesworth	2 6
James Garrett	0 6	A Lover of Truth	0 6
James Smith	0 6	William Blair	0 3
Nays and Barns, Radical		A Friend	0 2
Store Shaw Lane	2 6	A Friend	0 2
Thomas Ohenshaw, Hough	1 6	Alexander Garrett	0 3
Mrs. Taylor	1 6	James Paterson	0 2
Ellis Welsh	2 6	Lewis Waring	0 6
John O'Connell	1 0	Hugh Cargon	0 0
Amicus	1 0	Arthur Malone	0 6
Paradox, a faithful Unbeliever	3 6	John Holmes	0 6
Moses Hedlister	0 6	Mr. Carlile is a Tearaway	
Oliver Nicholson	1 0	of a Writer	1 0
James Mason, a Friend to		Nobody	0 2
Universal Liberty	1 6	One who thinks Christianity	
William Whitelegg, Material- ist		needs not the Civil Power	1 0
Richard Leach	0 6	A Lover of Discussion	1 0
William Rannlin	0 3	Religious Inspector	5 0
James Anderson	0 6	John Alexander Pinnock	0 6
Walter Beattie	0 6	James Dulkie	0 6
John M'Author	0 6	George Malone	1 0
A true Radical	0 3	A Friend	1 0
Rev. George Harris of the	0 6	Alexander Henry	0 6
Unitarian Meeting House	2 6	Hugh Greenfield, a true born	
A Friend to the Roman Ca- tholic Religion, and Free Discussion		Irishman	1 0
St. Matthew, chap. i. ver. 10 and 20, St. Luke chap. iii. ver. 23, three of Joseph's Tokens each a penny	10 0	G. Cnnlist	1 0
James Reaton, one that will join 10,000 any day to li- berate Mr. Carlile	0 3	E. W.	1 0
No. 13, Vol. VIII.	1 0	John Hardie	0 6
		William Yates	1 0
		Alexander Hardie	1 0
		Peter Pramic, Materialist	1 0
		David Pramic, Materialist	1 0
		Radical Barber	0 6
		Richard Williams	0 6
		John Pye, Materialist	0 6

Henry Ashton	0 6	Isaac Heap, Materialist	1 0
W. H.	1 0	Henry Hebbert a Friend to	
Thomas Wilkinson	0 6	Civil and Religious Li-	
Buckley Miller, a Friend to		berty	0 6
Civil and Religious Liberty	2 6	James Barns, Shoemaker,	
Joseph Clement	0 6	Billey Sampson Went	0 6
Andrew Morgan	0 3	X. Y.	2 0
John Speakman	1 0	J. S.	3 0
Thomas Ashton	0 2	G. O.	1 0
A Deist	0 6	Joseph Lee	1 0
John Kennerdall, Materialist	0 6	Joseph Moses	0 6
Philanthropos	1 0		

TO MR. JOHN CAMERON, BOLTON, LANCA-SHIRE.

CITIZEN, Dorchester Gaol, Sept. 25, 1823.

I RETURN you and other Bolton Friends, thanks for this further subscription, and I should have been happy, if Mrs. Carlile could have made a longer stay with you: but her last month in Manchester was one continued series of disaster, as to the health of the children and herself, and blighted all the utility we had hoped to have received from her journey. Circumstances have prevented her visit to Dorchester, to give me an account of the friends whom she met and conversed with, so that I can now only return thanks to all who so warmly entertained her, until I have a better ground on which to address them privately and severally: which I hope will be in my power.

I am, Citizen, respectfully yours,

R. CARLILE.

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

DEAR SIR,

I AM deputed by a few friends of Halifax to desire your acceptance of the inclosed £2. being the amount of a subscription of a few friends assembled there; made to aid you in the arduous struggle you are making to annihilate delusion and despotism in every shape. And that you will make good use of it we have not the least doubt.

O! had the Spaniards but a *Carlile* among them seven years before their revolution, what a different scene would Spain now have presented to the world! Instead of being over-run, under the banners of the "God of St. Louis," and under the direction of Christian Inquisitors, we should have seen them rising from the oblivion of ages and re-assuming the character of man; we should have seen them repel their bloody invaders and spread the "dire contagion" of liberty to the utter destruction of all European despots!

Instead of this: the villainous priest, with his enervating dogmas, sways all! He reduces the majority of the nation to mere machines with which he works at his pleasure! He enforces his doctrine of "passive obedience and non-resistance" by anathemas and excommunications—by the terrors of hell and the rack—he prays for, curses, and deceives, the multitude, according to his political situation! It is his interest to gull the people with any thing that will keep them in subjection to him and his tool, or fellow tyrant—king. The king and the priest are necessary to each other; they cannot exist asunder; and until both are swept from the earth there will be nothing like happiness or liberty upon it.

And how are they to be swept away but by the line of conduct that you, dear Sir, have taken?

The very name of priest and king must cease to be heard of as relating to existing beings, before man will have arrived at his proper situation in the universe—before he will be prepared to preserve his liberty, when he has got it. All controul over the mind of man must be taken from the villainous priest before a nation will be prepared to rid itself of tyranny. Oh! that the Spaniards had been thus prepared!

What a cheering prospect must it be for you, Sir, through the gloom of your dungeon to think that when the "tug of war" shall (and it assuredly will) come, the minds of Englishmen will be freed from the dogmas of the "holy" hypocrites! That when the moment, big with great events shall arrive, Englishmen, in spite of Superstition's roar,

"Can with steadfast and advancing scorn
Look in death's face full-sighted!"

That in the glorious cause of liberty they will seek for an immortality; and not in the degrading nonsense of Bibles and of Korans!

And is it for endeavouring to bring men's minds to this majestic state, that you, Mr. Carlyle, are wasting your prime in a dungeon? The answer, which is in the affirmative, would grate on the ears of some unsophisticated man, like some fierce contention of the elements, and rend his frame as the yawning earth is rent by the dreadful war within its bosom! He would stand aghast and enquire if this be life, if this be manhood, that can look tamely on and see millions trampled to the dust by a small banditti of detested things formed like themselves! That can, with a cold-bloodedness that palsies description, see society's most virtuous citizens dragged to the condign punishment which you have suffered for endeavouring to lead them to happiness! He would exclaim, talk of humanity! talk of liberty and ancestry indeed! and view such things as these! Give me the wild Indian for my ancestor and my brother, give me any thing before a band of slaves and despots, where the million crouches before the dreadful thing itself created! That England may soon be emancipated from this state is the sincere wish of yours,

In behalf of the Subscribers,

JAMES PENNY.

William Simpson, Materialist and Republican, an Enemy to all the Host of Time-serving Impostors	2 0	George Gawkerodger	1 0
Daniel Carter, an Enemy to Priests	1 0	T. M. C. D. Friend to Truth	2 6
James Moore, a Republican, and an Enemy to Spies and Informers	2 0	P. Q., Contemner of Religious Tracts	1 0
William Turner, an Enemy to Kings and Priests	1 0	A Well-wisher to Liberty	2 0
John Smithson, Leeds, Materialist	2 0	Thomas Green, Millbridge	1 0
James Penny, Millbridge	1 0	R. Brock, Tax-Eaters Enemy	1 0
J. G., an Enemy to Kings and Priests and all the juggling Host of Religious Tract Makers	1 0	A Friend to Reform	0 6
J. Allen, Republican	1 0	Smith Boocock	0 6
J. Crabtree, a Lover of Truth	1 0	J. Gladhill, an Enemy to bullying Tax-Eaters	0 6
J. Moore, an open Enemy to King and Priestcraft	2 0	J. Halstead	0 6
Thomas Howson, a Materialist	1 0	Charles Milnes a Republican, and Enemy to Kings and Priests and all the Host of Vermin	1 0
J. Brierley, a Friend to Freedom	1 0	J. Chad, an Enemy to Kings and Priests	1 0
		J. Dobson	0 6
		J. R., an Enemy to Green Bag Just-asses	1 0
		Z. W., one who has been Methodist; now reformed, sees through the juggling of Religious Tracts	1 0
		J. R., a Republican	1 0

W. of Rastrick, a Friend to Truth	1 6	Religious Tract Makers with their bullying Tax- Eaters, work for their liv- ing	6 6
From several Friends to truth who wish to see Kings and Priests and all the juggling			

TO MR. JAMES PENNY MILLBRIDGE NEAR
HALIFAX.

CITIZEN, Dorchester Gaol, September 28, 1823.

I RETURN thanks to the friends at Halifax who have sent me their aid a second time: and am pleased to find that they are beginning to deal with *the right sort of spirit*. The spirit of Liberty is that right sort of spirit: which I define to be a spirit that seeks to shake off all assumption of power and influence exercised by one man over another. Society at large is but a National Convention: and legislation by Representatives is nothing more than that Convention so condensed as to form a convenient assembly for deliberation: therefore, the man who cries out against a National Convention is an ignorant man who does not understand what is the basis of society, or a cunning rogue who fears the loss of usurped power. In England, as well as in Spain, both of these characters are yet to be found: and though we have certainly the advantage of the Spaniards in regard to well informed numbers: yet the country has much more cause of alarm at an invasion *now* than ever it had during the power of Buonaparte.

If under Buonaparte there were a body of men in England who wished an invasion on the ground that it would overthrow the Boroughmongers; these Boroughmongers would now prefer an invasion by the combined armies of the Holy Alliance to the loss of their Borough power. They would rather yield their influence to an invading army than to a condensed National Convention—to the representatives of the whole people. And that projects of this kind are contemplated and under arrangement,

the conduct of our ministers combined with the conduct of the Despots of the Continent clearly indicate. It may be a work of years: but as sure as an Austrian Army has invaded Italy, as sure as a Bourbon Army has invaded Spain, so sure would a change, or an attempt at change in this country lead to an attempted invasion. It is the war of physical against moral power: of powerful ignorance against knowledge: of tyranny against liberty; and it will extend itself wherever the hostile elements are in xistence and hold a nearlyqual power.

I am not one to think that all is over in Spain. I am not one to think that the loss of Riego, or of the whole body of the Cortes will finish the war now raging there. That war will only terminuate with the power of priestcraft and kingcraft. A French Army has marched from the Pyrennees to Cadiz: but it has not cleared its opponents as it passed on. There are resolute bodies of men now fighting in the very heart of the country, and such bodies of men will be constantly rising at all points.

What a few able and well disposed men may do has been evinced by Mina and his companions in Catalonia. In that province the Invaders have been out-generalled and beaten at all points. Had there been a Mina in each province, Spain would have exhibited a very different appearance to what it does at present. To me it appears, that the Cortes of Spain have trusted too much to Providence and the goodness of their cause. If Providence had not been calculated upon, and the desperation of the cause of their powerful opponents taken into consideration, a different kind of resistance might have been provided. If, when Naples was invaded by Austrians for having adopted the Spanish Constitution, Spain had raised the tri-coloured flag on the Pyrennees, the whole of that rabble which has ravaged her own bosom, might have been led into France against those very Bourbons who are now wielding them as weapons of mischief.

What has happened in Spain will go to justify all the acts of the National Convention, in France. The main error in France was the want of annual elections. Had that

been practised all would have ended well. Abuses of power would not then have existed.

These are fine lessons. We shall have a task of the same kind imposed upon us in turn; and let us profit by experience. In Catalonia we may see that a well informed few are of more importance to the cause of liberty than an ignorant, numerous, desperate rabble, who will be everywhere found ready to follow the current of success: submitting to the advocacy of every pretension that is uppermost. Knowledge is the only power by which liberty can be obtained and sustained. Let us instruct ourselves and all within our reach: that is our present and primary duty.

Respectfully yours,

RICHARD CARLILE.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE VICAR OF CERNE, AND MR. CARLILE.

TO MR. CARLILE, CASTLE, DORCHESTER.

Cerne, August 27, 1823.

ONCE more I entreat you to examine the selection of texts which I lately sent you.

The following passage will serve to explain the cause of your "ignorance," and at the same time shew you the remedy.

1 Corinthians ii.; observe particularly ver. 14. John viii. 43 to 47. John iii. to the end.

The sovereignty of God in the communication of knowledge:—Matthew xi. 25, 26, 27.

The way to obtain it:—Isaiah xlvi. 18. James i. 5 and 6. 1 Corinthians xiii. 1 to 11; attend particularly to ver. 3. Luke xi. 13.

The volume which will accompany this, if you will give it a patient perusal will, I hope, help you in the attainment of *self-knowledge*, but not without divine teaching, vide Jeremiah xvii. 9, 10

Psalms cxxxix, 23, 24. Genesis vi. 5. Psalms li. 10. Compare Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26, with Hebrews x. 22, then turn to Ezekiel xxxvi. 37.

I shall be ready to furnish you with some further combinations of texts similar to the above if you desire it.

You do not mention Miss Carlile. She will I hope be prevailed on to look into these and the former set of parallel passages, and also to read the sermons on the attributes of the Deity. As soon as the book now sent has been read by yourself and Miss C. I will thank you to return it.

I know not how to accept your present. I am sorry you have incurred the trouble and expence of purchasing it for me. I had some of Paine's works in my possession a few years ago which I destroyed, and should think it my duty to do the same with the publication you have now sent me were I to retain it. It has been my anxious desire to give you no offence in the intercourse I have held with you.

I am, Sir, your humble Servant,

J. DAVIS.

P. S. I wish I could persuade you to accept the loan of Scott's *Commentary on the Bible*, and give it an attentive reading, examining the references as you proceed. Indeed I have your written promise to "read carefully whatever books I send you as early as your avocations will admit." I hope to be apprised when you are ready for the first vol. of this excellent *Commentary*.

Do not be displeased when I explicitly tell you, that I think it would be folly, and worse than a waste of precious time for me to read your writings, or those of Thomas Paine. Would you attend to the reasonings, if they may be so termed, of a person born blind, who should deny the existence of the sun because he never beheld its light? You would, perhaps, pity the poor man and place him where he might feel its warmth and be in the way to receive its irradiations if the physical obstacles should happily be removed from the faculty of vision. How else could you produce conviction on his mind? Thus, Sir, I would endeavour to bring you to the Bible, that you might feel the influence of "the Sun of Righteousness" shining therein, the light of the moral and spiritual world. Should he be pleased in his sovereign goodness to say, "let there be light" in your understanding, as yet destitute of spiritual discernment, you would at once acknowledge what you now deny. If you experience not this happy transition "from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God" the fault will be your own. Adopt the appointed means and you shall succeed. I have pointed out the remedy in some of the re-

ferences. Search for a fuller acquaintance with it in the inspired volume, especially note Revelations iii. 17, 18. May the God of mercy, who would not that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; and who has exalted Jesus Christ to be a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, "enable you to see the things belonging to your everlasting peace, before they are for ever hid from your eyes."

Permit me to observe, that you might redeem time for purposes useful to yourself and perhaps to others, whom you are now leading into deeper and deeper darkness if you would suspend the publication of your periodical work called "The Republican*." "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Not *your's*, alas! for "other Lords have dominion over you."

The mode of studying the Bible and the books which I have recommended to your perusal are fully sufficient to remove the difficulties and objections suggested in your first letter.

TO THE REV. MR. DAVIS, CERNE.

SIR,

Dorchester Gaol, Sept. 27, 1823.

On saturday last, I received, through the Post, a packet containing your note with "Mason on Self Knowledge" and a volume of Mrs. Digby's entitled "Evidences &c. by Thomas Erskine." On monday I received Grotius from Mr. Wood. I promise you that they shall all have my serious attention: in fact, I have nearly gone through Grotius.

I was glad to see a volume from Mrs. Digby, and I very much desire to see that lady: because, I am informed, that she is really good, and that she has very erroneous impressions of me. If ever you pay me another visit, and can induce Mrs. Digby to accompany you, I will endeavour to make her visit as pleasant to herself as it will be to me.

My sister has read Erskine and Mason through, and as

* There is something really cunning in this recommendation! How would Mr. Davis have stared if I had suggested the propriety of his relinquishing his tithes, his glebes, his preachings: and all his ecclesiastical labours and profits for the better examination of my publication? How would he have stared? He would have stared! as he stared at the story of the Potatoes, the Lamb, and the Ducks!

much of Grotius as she pleased. I assure you, that I withhold no book from her: nor do I take any pains to controul her opinions. I believe she has seen enough to know that religion is the source of nothing but sectarianism and human hostility, and that all sects have the same bad foundation.

I do not mean this to be an answer to your last to me. I intend it as a mere acknowledgment of the receipt, and to accompany a few Printed Bible Texts to shew you that I deal in them as well as other things*.

I will trouble you with nothing more of my writing in print, or Thomas Paine's writing, though I duly estimate the mind that says it cannot read such things. If a trouble to you in disposing of them, by your permission, I will convert the gift to a loan: for *burning of books is a folly*: it does not answer them: nor does it stay the circulation: as they are easily reprinted. I should almost feel justified to borrow Scott's Bible and burn it, if I were to hear that you burned the "Age of Reason" I sent to you.

I will not trouble you to send Scott's Bible. I will only look into it on the condition of your bringing it under your arm and asking what I have to say to any part or parts of it. Every thing else would be a waste of time, and I assure you that I labour hard. Nothing you can write will offend me: but I feel offended when I hear that you talk about my *corrupting* young Mr. Hassel. This is slander, back-biting, and one of those offences which your New Testament reprobates. You do not know me, Mr. Davis. You may be a good man; but you are not less disposed to corrupt a young man than myself. You find that I am opposed to you in sentiment, and without examination you set me down as wrong. Enquire. Examine.

Most respectfully yours,

RICHARD CARLILE.

* Scripturian's Creed—Character of the Bible and Bible God—and the Penny list of Bible Texts.

NOTES TO BURDON'S ESSAY ON LIBERTY
AND NECESSITY,

Which appeared in "The Republican," No. 10, Vol. 8.

"DIVINES." To enumerate all the divines who have attempted to solve the difficulties of this subject, and to reconcile faith and reason, would be to transcribe volumes of divinity, a task for which I have no inclination. I have got to the bottom of all their mud and mire, and tread on firm ground; for I believe nothing that I cannot understand, how little soever that may be; and on these topics, if every man would ingenuously confess his ignorance, the sum of our knowledge would be found to lie in a small space. The number of moral philosophers who have attempted to solve the difficulties of Liberty and Necessity, is not much less than that of the divines who have tried to bring reason and theology together: the subject is no where discussed with greater force of argument, vivacity, and good temper, than in the correspondence between Voltaire and Frederic of Prussia; the monarch had the best side of the question, but neither was deficient in elegance and well-turned compliment; they disputed like philosophers and like gentlemen, not like angry pedants tenacious of their own opinions; and their dispute is a model of philosophic discussion and polite controversy.—*Vide Œuvres Posthumes de Frederic II.* vol. vi. ed. Lond.

Though much has been written on the doctrine of Necessity, and many forcible arguments have been adduced to prove its existence, it has not yet found many proselytes, and for this reason; it is inconsistent with the belief of one of the principal doctrines of Christianity; for no man who believes in the force of Necessity, can believe himself the subject of future reward or punishment. Lord Kaines has

answered all the objections to this doctrine on the ground of immorality; and his essay is one of the best which the subject can afford.—See also Jenyns's *Miscellanies*, and Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, p. 327. ed. 4to. *Hume's Essays*, vol. ii. *Godwin on Political Justice*. *Belsham's Moral Philosophy*. *Hartley on Man*, &c. &c.

The poets, even on so unpromising a subject, have attempted to submit the subtleties of argument to the trammels of verse; and have reasoned on fate, free-will, and necessity. Milton is a believer in free-will, and puts his opinions into the mouth of God Almighty.—*Vide Par. Lost*, book iii. l. 95 to 134. Dryden favours the contrary opinion, and thus argues in his *Palamon and Arcite*:—

The Power that ministers to God's decrees,
And executes on earth what God foresees,
Call'd Providence, or Chance, or fatal Sway,
Comes with resistless force, and finds or makes her way;
Nor kings, nor nation, nor united power,
One moment can retard th' appointed hour.
And some one day, some wondrous chance appears,
Which happen'd not in centuries of years;
For sure whate'er we mortals hate or love,
Or hope or fear, depends on powers above;
They move our appetites to good or ill,
And by foresight necessitate our will.

The writings of the ancients abound with proofs of their belief in an over-ruling Necessity, which the Greeks called by various names, and the Latins *Necessitas* and *Fatum*; the force of destiny they believed to be superior to that of the gods, and the dæmon of Socrates means nothing else than the power of necessity.—*Vide Plutarch*. I had conceived it must mean this, long before I had read the passage to which I now refer my readers. Euripides has a strong passage to the same purpose.—*Vide Ion*. l. 1393; and another, l. 1408. Juvenal says also,

Fata regunt homines.

Sat. ix. ver. 32.

Though my memory does not immediately supply me with all the passages I have read on this topic, yet any man conversant with the classics will be at no loss to convince himself of what I affirm. I have selected a few which may serve to show the general tendency of heathen belief on this subject.

The treatise of Plutarch on Fate contains some very strong passages on the subject of necessity. "All things," says he, "in heaven and in earth are constituted by an original necessity, and governed by the same, through all the revolutions of time and eternity." He then endeavours to reconcile this notion of necessity with the idea of providence, free-will, and contingency; in which he is by no means successful, and argues like a man who does not understand his subject, and is restrained in his inquiry after truth by some latent prejudice. To this it may be answered, that the belief of the heathens is of no consequence to us who have the light of the gospel to guide us; but in my humble opinion, the belief of the wisest heathens is preferable to that of those who believe in revelation: for the one is the effect of unclouded reason, the other of blind superstition. Innumerable passages might be quoted from Greek and Roman authors to prove the existence of that necessity by which all the universe is linked together. Indeed it is hardly possible to open any Greek or Roman writer without finding the power of Necessity acknowledged, in almost every page, as superior to all human power, and even to that of the gods; in short, as coeval with the existence of matter, and existing from eternity. Livy has these words: "ut pareatur Necessitati, quam ne Dii quidem superant." Lib. ix. c. 4. Hesiod acknowledges the gods to have been created, and to be the produce of earth and heaven; and the whole story of Prometheus is no more than an allegory to represent mankind struggling with the evils of Nature, and submitting at last to Necessity.

The God of the Jews and the Christians is nothing more

than the all-powerful Necessity of the Heathens, clothed with human attributes; and for my own part, I had rather submit to the latter than the former; because in suffering misfortune by the will of Providence, I feel myself treated with unkindness and unjust partiality; but in suffering under an inevitable necessity, I experience, no more than the common lot of all human beings. *Vide Lucian's (Jupiter confuted),* in which he boldly asserts the power of Fate over gods and men.

“*Jupiter is the air.*”

Isthic is est Juppiter, quem dico, Græci vocant Aëra, qui-que ventus est et nubes.

Ennii Fragm. Ed. Hessel. p. 180.

“*A Particular interposition of Providence.*” The opinion of Dr. Hawkesworth on this topic is said to have cost him his life; for the clamour excited against him by priests and bigots on account of a passage in the preface to the first Voyages of Byron and Cook, in which he ventured to deny the doctrine of a particular Providence, had, an effect upon his health and spirits which he could not surmount.

“*The root of all morality.*” A modern philosopher, of no small authority, has shown very forcible, that the efficacy of moral instruction, and consequently of morality, is by no means diminished by this doctrine: for, says he, “If the human mind were not ruled by motives, this art could not possibly have any existence.” *Vide Forsyth's Principles of Moral Science,* a book which contains many new and interesting views of man and society.

“*The mechanism.*” According to the system of Necessity, vice is no more in our own power than virtue: we act in both cases under the impressions which certain objects make upon our senses, and these senses move our desires, desires operate on the will, and the will produces the action; the rectitude or depravity of any man's conduct, therefore, depends on the impressions which he receives in his youth; for these impressions, frequently repeated, be-

come habits, and form the character of the man: hence will be seen the necessity of a virtuous education. Let no man be alarmed at the idea of his being a mere machine, for at any rate he is not of his own making, and therefore has no more right to claim a liberty of action, than the right of making himself; he can do nothing which is not intended by a superior power, and therefore he need not fear being impelled to vice by an irresistible propensity; for if such is the will of Providence, it is not in his power to resist, though he may suffer for his imprudence: I will not venture to maintain that whatever is, is right; but I will affirm that it cannot be otherwise than it is.

“*To interpret.*” Among many instances that might be produced of oracles and men pretending to know the will of God, the two which are now cited are, the one the most serious, and the other the most ridiculous:—The Carians, when attacked by Harpagus, one of Cyrus’s generals, and threatened with the loss of their liberty, determined to defend themselves by cutting a canal across an isthmus, and make their country an island; but finding some difficulty in it from the rocky nature of the ground, they consulted the oracle of Apollo at Delphos, who returned them for answer, “That they must desist, for Jupiter would have made their peninsula an island, if he had chosen it.” *Herod.* lib. i. c. 174.—In the reign of Charles II. of Spain, it was proposed by some Dutchmen to render the Tagus navigable from Lisbon to Madrid. On the proposal being laid before the council of Castile, they returned for answer, after much deliberation, “That if God had chosen it to be so, he would have made it so; and therefore they begged leave to reject the proposal.”—*Rev. E. Clarke’s Letters on the Spanish Nation, Letter 15.*

“*Anima mundi.*” It is somewhat singular, that as the vital spirit of man has been personified under the name of the soul, so the vital principle of the universe has been personified under the name of God; and yet neither can be proved to have any separate existence distinct from matter.

III. "If by a God is meant." Virgil, who leaned considerably to the doctrines of Epicurus, has expressed this meaning fully in two lines:

Totamque infusa per artus.

Mens agitat molem, et magno se corpore miscet.

Aen. vi. 727.

Vide also Georg. ii. ver. 327; with Heyne's Notes.

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